

households interviewed to be food insecure, PHR called "the cuts against individuals who are in the U.S. legally and who pay taxes. . . a serious human rights violation." Legal immigrant households were ten times more likely than the general population to suffer from severe hunger and one-third of immigrant households surveyed reported moderate or severe hunger caused by a lack of sufficient resources.

A similar study by the California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) echoes these findings, but also documents an "alarmingly high rate of hunger among children in legal immigrant households where food stamps have been cut." Immigrant households in Los Angeles that lost benefits were 30% more likely to experience "food insecurity with extreme hunger" than those that did not. In San Francisco, this number jumped to 173%, making immigrants affected by PRWORA almost twice as likely to be suffering from extreme hunger than an unaffected group. Moreover, in both cities, immigrant households with children which had lost food stamps were almost two-thirds more likely to experience serious food problems than similar households that retained complete benefits.

Although both studies were conducted prior to the Agricultural Act, CFPA's findings were shocking even though California exercised its option—unlike most states—to fill the gap with state funds for the same population that now has regained eligibility. Without further legislation, marked improvements of this nature in the future are unlikely because most of those benefiting from the restoration are immigrant children living in "mixed" households where "eligible" individuals live with others who are not. In Texas alone, there are 65,396 "mixed" households with approximately 9,000 legal immigrant and 145,000 citizen children. Although these children can again collect food stamps, the total resources available to the family remain low because their parents still cannot.

IS "FAIRNESS" IN THE FUTURE?

The Fairness to Legal Immigrants Act of 1999, recently introduced in the Senate, proposes the most extensive restoration to date and offers the first substantive opportunity to right the wrongs done to legal immigrants by PRWORA. If approved, this bill would restore food stamps to all eligible "before" immigrants and those otherwise qualified "after" immigrants who suffer domestic abuse. It would also allow states to cover all pregnant legal immigrant women and children who entered after August 22, 1996 under Medicaid and restore many health and SSI disability benefits for certain immigrants from both the "before" and "after" groups. This bill represents a significant step towards rectifying several of the most controversial outcomes of welfare reform by protecting dependent children, addressing the mixed household problem and providing essential food assistance to many needy legal immigrant families. Wholehearted support by this Congress would send a clear message to law-abiding, taxpaying immigrants that they need not fear, that they need not go hungry and that they will not be abandoned in their times of need.

HONORING ODYSSEY OF THE MIND TEAMS

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 1999

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the achievements of a

group of young people who have distinguished themselves as some of the brightest in the world. On July 6, school and local officials, friends, and family, gathered to honor students from Mason Middle School and Crary Middle School, both located in Waterford, Michigan, for their success in the Odyssey of the Mind world competition, recently held in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Students from Mason Middle School placed fifth out of 58 teams in the vehicle problem category, designing a vehicle that would travel through three countries, without touching the ground, and setting off a specific event upon entering the country. Through the use of superior problem solving skills, the Mason team created a vehicle that would travel through China, Egypt, and the United States. In addition to placing fifth, the team won the Ranatra Fusca Award, the competition's highest honor for creativity.

The Mason team includes Alysse Cohen, Robert Dziurda, Tamara Haynes, Caitlin Johnson, Megan Long, and Elizabeth McGregor. Their coaches are Suzy Cohen and Robin McGregor.

Students from Crary Middle School placed sixth out of 53 teams in the environmental challenge category, creating a series of possible habitats for an animal following the destruction of the creature's original habitat, with the judges given the ability to randomly poison one of the habitats.

The Crary team includes Alex Caryl, Eric Chapman, Steve Grabowski, Brad Howell, and Jeff Ritter. The coaches were Angela and Tom Chapman.

Odyssey of the Mind teams provide a large opportunity for some of country's brightest young people to exercise their cognitive and problem-solving skills. To compete in a world competition, a team must place first in the state in their category. It is rare for more than one team from the same school district, and even more rare for them both to perform as highly as Mason and Crary has done.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when the future of our young adults is a constant concern, I am very happy to honor these students and the parents who have taken time out of their schedules to coach the teams. I ask my colleagues in the 106th Congress to join me in congratulating Mason and Crary Middle Schools.

IN RECOGNITION OF TAMARAC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 1999

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the selection of Tamarac Elementary as a "National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence." It is both an honor and a privilege for me to recognize this exemplary school for receiving such a distinguished award.

Since 1982, the Blue Ribbon Schools Program has celebrated many of America's most successful schools. A Blue Ribbon symbol denotes a level of educational proficiency recognized by parents and students in thousands of communities. Superior teaching, dedicated staff, and a caring environment for students are a few reasons why Tamarac Elementary

has been chosen for such an exclusive award after a rigorous selection process.

Tamarac Elementary School was built in 1973 and is the only school in the city of Tamarac, Florida. The school's extraordinary devotion to educating the leaders of the 21st century is illustrated best by its mission statement: "The mission of Tamarac Elementary is to establish an educational environment where children reach their highest potential intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically through a total commitment of school, home, and community." Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my colleagues will agree with me when I say that this mission statement demonstrates noble goals—goals which all schools should strive to fulfill.

Tamarac Elementary has taken the Blue Ribbon Challenge and triumphed with flying colors. I wish to congratulate Principal Kathleen Goldstein and her devoted staff for this well deserved honor. This is truly an accomplishment that the entire Tamarac community can be proud of.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HERBERT H. BATEMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 1999

Mr. BATEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am regretfully absent and missed 3 votes on July 12, 1999. The first vote was on the Journal and the rest were under suspension of the rules. I wish to include in the RECORD my statement as to how I would have voted had I been present.

On rollcall vote No. 277, I would have voted "aye." On rollcall vote No. 278, I would have voted "aye." On rollcall vote No. 279, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO BRIAN BLAHA

HON. JAMES M. TALENT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 1999

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding student from my district. Brian Blaha, a student from Parkway Central High School, set his sights high, and as a result, he has been named one of the 20 finalists in the 31st United States National Chemistry Olympiad.

Approximately 10,000 chemistry students nationwide competed in a series of qualifying events, organized by the American Chemical Society, for the opportunity to represent the United States. The competition included laboratory and written examinations, which covered topics typically found in third-year college curricula.

I would also like to recognize Brian's chemistry teacher Mr. Mark Schuermann whose dedication and excellence in teaching has aided in the success of his students. The achievements of Brian Blaha are an impressive reflection on his teachers.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to recognize this extraordinary student for his achievements. Brian Blaha's success is a true reflection on not only his drive and determination, but also on the parents, family members,

and teachers who have supported his hard work and determination. Brian is an excellent example of what young people will achieve when given the opportunity.

1986 AMENDMENTS TO THE FALSE CLAIMS ACT

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 1999

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, thirteen years ago, Congress passed the 1986 Amendments to the False Claims Act. They have been an enormous success.

As the principal sponsors of those amendments, Senator GRASSLEY and I are gratified to see how well they have worked. Recoveries to the United States Treasury pursuant to the False Claim Act have increased a remarkable 40-fold compared to the period before the amendments were adopted. More than \$2.5 billion has been recovered to date from *qui tam* lawsuits, with half of that amount coming in the last few years. Another \$3 billion in recoveries is anticipated from the pending cases the government has already joined. This exponential growth in recoveries to the Treasury is expected to continue.

The biggest payoff however has been in the deterrence of fraud. An analysis by William L. Stringer, the former Chief Economist for the U.S. Senate Committee on Budget, has estimated the deterrence attributable to the *qui tam* provisions of the False Claims Act for the first 10 years (through 1996) is \$35 billion to \$75 billion. He estimates that the next 10 years will produce additional savings of \$105 billion to \$210 billion. Indeed, many believe that the substantial reduction in Medicare outlays in recent years is due in no small part to the effect these amendments have had in curtailing fraud.

It is not an overstatement to suggest that there has been a cultural shift within companies that do business with the government. Because of the vigilance of the citizenry and the use of the *qui tam* provisions of False Claims Act, companies and entities are changing the way they do business with the government. Instead of developing strategies of "revenue enhancement" when dealing with the government, these same entities are developing new compliance programs to ensure that the government is not overcharged. This shift has occurred for one fundamental reason: The risks of getting caught, exposed and subjected to substantial penalties have grown tremendously as a direct result of the reinvigoration of the government's fraud enforcement caused by the 1986 amendments.

This cultural change is very much what Senator GRASSLEY and I hoped and expected would develop with the enactment of the 1986 amendments. We wanted to encourage, with appropriate incentives, the citizenry to take us the fight against fraud perpetrated against our government. We had hoped to forge a public/private partnership to go after those who would deliberately overcharge (or underpay) the government. People who are insiders within companies and witness fraud, businesses that become aware of illegal practices by competitors, individuals who through their own investigative efforts turn up information of

government overcharges (or underpayments) and, equally important, the private attorneys and law firms who work with the Justice Department and heavily invest their own time, resources, and expertise over many years these individuals, companies and attorneys have collectively turned the *qui tam* provisions of the False Claims Act into the single best example of privatization success.

In the thirteen years since the 1986 amendments were adopted, more than cases have been filed. As a result, a substantial body of False Claims law has developed.

I rise today to express the grave concerns that Senator GRASSLEY and I have about judicial decisions involving one important provisions of the law: the "public disclosure" bar. We have reviewed with dismay opinions of many courts that have misunderstood and therefore, misinterpreted what Congress intended when in adopted this provision. The courts' interpretations of the "public disclosure" bar are often in conflict with each other, resulting in great confusion. Worse, taken together these decisions many discourage many good cases from being filed, threatening to seriously undermine the effectiveness of the Act.

Because of our concerns about judicial interpretation of the "public disclosure" bar, we wrote to Attorney General Reno to set forth our views in detail about this provisions and the various circuit court interpretations. We ask that the Department of Justice, as the government agency with primary responsibility for enforcing the False Claims Act, be especially vigilant in helping courts correctly implement the Congressional policy that underlies the "public disclosure" bar.

We also believe that it would be useful for courts to understand what we as the principal authors of the law intended in creating the "public disclosure" bar.

By introducing our letter to Attorney General Reno into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, it is our intention to make it available to federal courts for guidance and perspective.

H.R. 2499, THE SILENT SKIES ACT

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, the Silent Skies Act, which I am introducing along with Representatives CROWLEY, HYDE, SHAYS and fourteen other original cosponsors, is intended to expedite the implementation of the next generation of quieter airplane engines.

So many members have airports in their district and have received the same letters from constituents. Every day and every night planes pass over your constituents' homes, businesses, and schools. They interrupt all aspects of life for those who reside under flight paths. While there is little we can do about the every-growing volume of air traffic, we can ensure the planes that fly overhead are as quiet as technology will allow.

In 1990, Congress passed the Aviation Noise and Capacity Act, a measure that led to the implementation of Stage 3 aircraft and reduced noise from airplanes by 50%. By the end of this year, Stage 3 will be fully implemented and most of the U.S. commercial fleet will be in compliance with these new lower

noise levels. While we recognize the contributions the airline industry has made in reducing the amount of noise coming from their aircraft, the number of flights going in and out of major airports continues to increase. Our constituents need relief.

By September 2001, the International Civil Aviation Organization will have approved international standards for Stage 4 engines. Our bill simply says that our constituents deserve relief, and they deserve it as soon as possible. The Silent Skies Act mandates a 10 year timetable, beginning in 2002, to phase in Stage 4 engines.

It is time for the Congress to take the lead again. This bill does just that. I am proud to introduce this bipartisan legislation and urge my colleagues to support this bill.

SUMMARY H.R. 2499, THE SILENT SKIES ACT

This bill expedites the implementation of Stage 4-compliant aircraft. In 1990, Congress passed the Aviation Noise and Capacity Act, a measure that led to the development and implementation of Stage 3 aircraft, and reduced aircraft noise by 50%. By the end of this year, Stage 3 will be fully implemented and most of the U.S. commercial fleet will be in compliance with these new lower noise levels. Stage 4 represents the next level of noise reduction, and would reduce airplane noise by an estimated 40%.

This bill directs the Secretary of Transportation to issue regulations establishing minimum standards for Stage 4 noise levels no later than December 31, 2001;

Directs the phase in of these new standards over a ten year period, beginning in 2002;

Directs the Secretary of Transportation to submit a report to Congress on the progress being made toward compliance with Stage 4 implementation; and

Removes the noise level exemption for supersonic civil transport aircraft.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HEALTH RESEARCH AND QUALITY ACT OF 1999

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 1999

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing, along with my colleagues, Representatives SHERROD BROWN and JIM GREENWOOD, the Health Research and Quality Act of 1999. We are introducing this bipartisan legislation to reauthorize and redefine the mission of the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research. Our bill renames it as the Agency for Health Research and Quality (AHRQ-pro-nounced "arc").

The purpose of this new name, and the reauthorization, is to foster comprehensive improvements in our health care system. Our bill refocuses the efforts of this critical agency to support private sector initiatives. Building on its current activities, the new agency will become a key partner to the private sector in improving the quality of health care in America.

Specifically, our bill directs the new agency to take action to improve health care quality by: Conducting and supporting research to reduce errors in medicine; supporting the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) and expanding its sample size to provide information on the quality of patient care; supporting research to evaluate and initiatives to advance